



Diploma Thesis Evaluation Form

Author: Mark Nairn

Title: NEUTRALITY AS A TOOL OF PERSUASION: THE LISBON EXPERIENCE
IN IRELAND 2008

Programme/year: MISS/2016

Author of Evaluation (supervisor/external assessor): Tomáš Kučera

Criteria	Definition	Maximm	Points
Major Criteria			
	Research question, definition of objectives	10	7
	Theoretical/conceptual framework	30	29
	Methodology, analysis, argument	40	32
<i>Total</i>		80	68
Minor Criteria			
	Sources	10	10
	Style	5	NA (5)
	Formal requirements	5	5
<i>Total</i>		20	20
TOTAL		100	88



Evaluation

Major criteria:

CRQ/thesis: I have not found an explicit articulation of the research question/thesis. The closest thing is the formulation of an aim 'to revisit the crucial moment in the formation of the foundation stone on which current predispositions of current Irish foreign policy are based'. Nonetheless, the objectives of the diploma thesis are clear and coherently pursued throughout the text.

Theoretical/conceptual framework: The thesis is built upon an outstanding review of the concept of neutrality, beginning with historical review and following with an analysis of the IR theory. Moreover, a part of the latter dealing with constructivism creates a smooth link to a competently written theory and methodology chapter.

With regards to the review, two small points for discussion has come to my mind. First, is it useful to count H. Bull as a realist, especially if neutrality as an institution is concerned? Second, the review of realism omits neorealist attempt to analyse strategy of small states, such as Rickli 2008, certainly relevant to the case of Ireland.

Analysis: the empirical analysis tries to apply critical discourse analysis. However, this is the least convincing part of the thesis. It includes topics not entirely relevant to the issue of neutrality (privatisation, worker's rights). The identification of 'the national interest frame' is too widespread to reveal anything. Moreover, the presentation of the analytical chapter is need of clarity. Having said that, I want to stress that the attempt for critical discourse analysis of parliamentary debate deserves appreciation.



Minor criteria:

Sources: rich and relevant. The thesis rests on a good lit review and actively addresses different findings in literature.

Writing style: this is not assessed due to author's declared dyslexia.

Overall evaluation:

Although having its weaknesses, this thesis surpasses the average standard of diploma theses by a safe margin. It deals with an issue that is relevant not only to the Irish politics. It contributes to the exciting debate about neutrality under CSDP.

Suggested grade: A

Signature: